

## HELP

### CONTRIBUTORS

### A call to our Friends...

**S**toreFront for Art & Architecture is an international forum to support innovations and experiments in the disciplines of art, architecture and other related fields, and a laboratory of aesthetics in search for cultural, social, and environmental advancements. As a forum, our programs of exhibitions, competitions, forums, publications, and building projects are open to professional and public participation, for critical and rudimentary dialogues across geographical, ideological, and disciplinary dimensions. StoreFront is a place, on idea and an action that stimulates discussion, provokes responses and strives to resolve questions.

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Steven Holl, Victoria Newhouse, Anonymous

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### Pull of Beauty

February-March 1996  
Curated by Kiki Smith and Victoria Milne



This exhibition uses architectural hardware as a means to explore the role of the decorative. In our time the idea of a pure rational form has been downgraded from a universal truth to an optional aesthetic. As we leave the original ideals and later severity of modernism, we are without a constructive, communicative and optimistic philosophy. Architectural hardware is an important and enduring expression of the architect. A light switch can be a personal missive from the designer to the one whose hand turns the switch. That aspect of missive, of communication from the designer is the central theme behind this exhibition.

### L.R. Petrosino Park Redevelopment

Design Competition

1996

**A**djacent to Storefront, at the intersection of Cleveland Place, Kenmare and Lafayette streets sits an irregularly surfaced concrete wedge surrounded by a wrought iron fence. Long neglected and under utilized as a public space, this semi-park presents itself as an important opportunity for Storefront's program of building projects. In collaboration with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and with support from the City Council member Kathryn Freed, Storefront has initiated a multi-phase project to re-design the park as an active and articulated public space. Following the new facade of Storefront by Vito Acconci and Steven Holl, Storefront turns the corner, to make another contribution to the built environment of this community.

### Adriaan GeuzeWest 8

April 1996

The work of West 8, a Rotterdam based studio of architects, city planners, and industrial designers led by landscape architect Adriaan Geuze, illustrates the increasing importance of landscape architecture in today's urban expansions and resource depletion. Fitfully, Geuze's projects are about designs and ideas of re-incorporating available spaces and places, and on the re-arrangements of urban demolition and dumping sites. Willing to negotiate within existing contexts, rather than up end them, his attitude on design is anti-monumental. Fitting with the Dutch history of claiming land from the sea, his view of landscape is not about reclaiming or returning to nature but rather appropriate artificialization of the given nature. And like the Dutch "Polders," Geuze's landscape, thus, is about creating generous yet open platforms open which other and unforeseen events can rise above it. Contrary to the secondary role of landscape architecture, having to vegetate or sculpt around the buildings, Geuze often plants and strategies from which architects can emerge.

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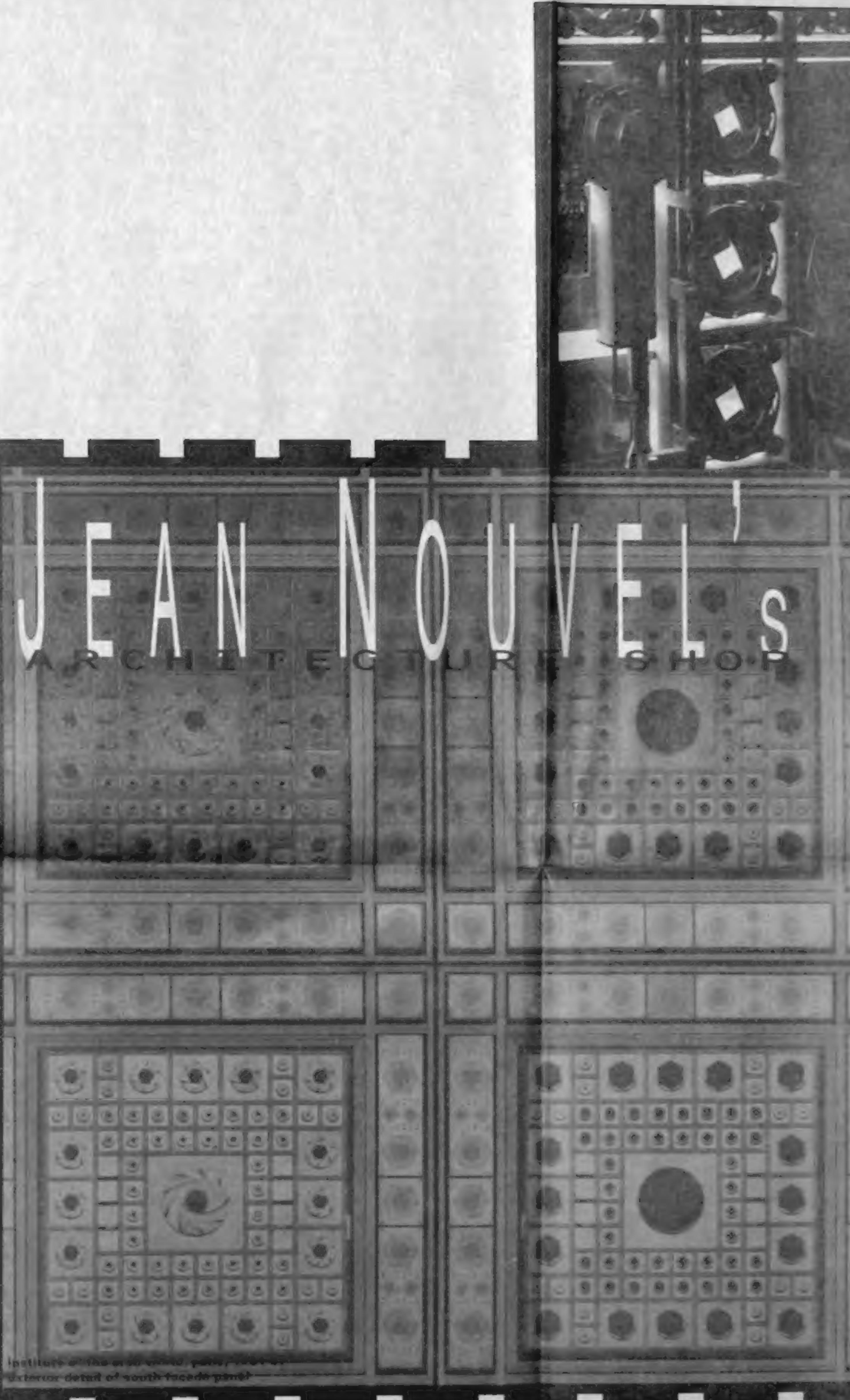
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12 December — 27 January, 1996

Jean Nouvel's **Architecture Shop**

STOREFRONT

ART AND ARCHITECTURE  
97 KENMARIE STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10012 - U.S.A.



December 12 - January 27, 1996

opening reception: December 12, 6-8pm  
gallery hours: tuesday-saturday 11-6pm

This exhibition has been made possible through the generous support of Etant Donnés/  
The French American Foundation for Contemporary Art and Peabody France.

STOREFRONT

art + architecture  
97 kenmare street, new york, ny 10012, usa tel: 212.431.5795 fax: 212.431.5795  
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## LECTURE

### Jean Nouvel

Recent Works

Wednesday, December 13  
6:30 pm

Wood Auditorium  
Avery Hall  
The Graduate School of Architecture, Planning,  
and Preservation  
Columbia University

Storefront is supported by:

Etat Donnés / The French American Foundation for Contemporary Art  
Joyce Mertz Gilmore Foundation  
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## EXHIBITION

### Jean Nouvel's Architecture Shop

December 12-January 27, 1996  
Opening Reception: December 12, 6:30pm  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 11-6pm

### Jean Nouvel's Architecture Shop

It is not a conventional exhibition of architecture. You will be asked to make some decisions and evaluate the situation presented. Gaze through the racks of postcards depicting Mr. Nouvel's buildings as slide projectors click through related images. Consider the plastic tubes of posters and packets of slides of earlier projects (all for sale) underneath video monitors, or peruse the selection of books available. Where are the architectural drawings and models? Are the reproductions shorthand explanations? This is not what you anticipated? The anticipation of convention needs some disruption.

Jean Nouvel's Architecture Shop is, on one hand, exactly what it title proclaims - a shop. For Storefront for Art & Architecture, this project raises many issues that, frankly, are a bit disorienting. In the context of Nouvel's work, the shop exists on many levels, from a site-specific adaptive re-use to an alternate reality.

Re-use for us is inevitable. Undoubtedly, New York City is the site of continued change. Change is so routine that the transformation of a favorite neighborhood shop repeat shop into the latest outpost of a national chain engenders only the briefest moment of reverie. This passage from an earlier identity to the next is characteristic of Jean Nouvel's work as well, which has frequently been described as "cinematic." In the cinema, this can be a tenuous moment, full of anticipation as... who knows? Maybe day will change to night.

The alternate realities Nouvel offers in this temporary "shop" produce their own tense moments as each viewer must confront the displays to make a decision on how to react. Is the shop an exhibit that is a parody of a shop, a critique of architecture's complicit participation in the capitalist structure, or is it simply a shop? If so, is it a shop, is one to participate and buy something? If so, what to buy?

To follow the cinematic analogy, there are parallel realities in film and in Jean Nouvel's architecture. While the techniques of film serve as a recording device that creates narratives and effects through representational images of experience, there is a simultaneous immediate experience in real time. Nouvel's work exists at the vanishing point on the horizon between these two experiences—the intellectual understanding of the narrative created from the given images and the corporeal reality of participating in it. The recognition of the thing itself is of less relevance in Nouvel's work than the visceral sensations and disorientations that precede identifying these sensations and describing the situation.

Watching a film—whether it is the hallucinatory future of Blade Runner, the post-apocalyptic extravaganza of Water World or the puritan New England of The Scarlet Letter—no matter what period of time it refers to, there is an inextricable present tense to space through which reality prevails and you are sitting there watching a series of projected images. Similarly, being inside a building and experiencing architecture is always in the present tense, even if the exposed timbering makes you think of turn-of-the-century New York. As an immediate spatial experience, time exists in two states—within the limits of the physical space (a present-time experience) and a mental space of memory, fantasy, imaging and intellect (all your experiences reconstituted from remembered indices). The mental space has no actual space of its own, but instead is nomadic and ever expanding as it absorbs and processes information. Although autonomous, mental space responds to catalysts offered by direct experience and physical situations. So, while the experience of real space is in motion (filmic), the

complementary mental space that accompanies it is undeniably affected by the status of memory. This combination is characteristic of processing imagery, the difference between them the difference between the static and the dynamic.

Jean Nouvel's work acknowledges this point of coincidence between real space and time and slippage effects. Where are you at an exhibit? Like at the movies, you are right there, but at the same time your roving mental space is there too, infusing the present with visual clues and past associations. At Nouvel's Galeries Lafayette building in Berlin, the building is used as both a transmitter of effect and a space for it. Situated at the intersection of two of the city's largest thoroughfares, billboard sized screens transmit images and light to passing traffic. The building is clad in a series of pierced spaces, including an un-enclosed street level, that afford glimpses of the inside to those on the outside and bring pedestrians inside. As lines of brand names appear as text ribbons surrounding the upper levels, this major department store announces its functions, and displays its effects to create an event. Nouvel's much smaller shop in New York uses the similar effects of declamatory display, this time with images of his own work.

The disorientation between new ways of approaching old attitudes, or the interface between the theoretics of the unexpected and the real world characterizes the content of Nouvel's work. Placing a greater emphasis on producing site specific effects to re-imagine thought and perception rather than merely building consistent arrangements of geographic tropes, Nouvel's work mediates between each site's contemporary circumstance and historical roots. Just as the material associations of Nouvel's glass transparencies protrude, combine and recede from sensory perception, so do the meanings of his projects.

Re-use for us is inevitable. Undoubtedly, New York City is the site of continued change. Change is so routine that the transformation of a favorite neighborhood shop repeat shop into the latest outpost of a national chain engenders only the briefest moment of reverie. This passage from an earlier identity to the next is characteristic of Jean Nouvel's work as well, which has frequently been described as "cinematic." In the cinema, this can be a tenuous moment, full of anticipation as... who knows? Maybe day will change to night.

In Jean Nouvel's Architecture Shop what disappears is the anticipated exhibition. By design, the conventional exhibition is a series of representations—drawings, models, photographs—proto-architecture, the before or after image of architecture or signs of architecture. Removed from actual scale, temporal or cultural conditions, these signs can be understood as abstract forms or mechanical reproductions. The critical distance accompanying these representations and their suggestions imposes a need for delayed gratification, a leap of faith. The new reality thus becomes what is in front of us—small objects, graphics, material.

With Jean Nouvel's Architecture Shop, a new function is inserted into Storefront's space, creating a total physical effect that defines a present space. In this ongoing immediate present, the viewing body is in motion. There are thousands of still or moving images. Space unfolds in the continuous present. There are objects to look at and consider while individual regard exists concurrently with the surrounding architectural space, blurring the distinction between standing back and looking at objects or effects of desire.

The space for individual participation at Jean Nouvel's Architecture Shop is perhaps the most direct experience many

have had with his architecture. How many have visited the Cartier Foundation building? How many have visited the Eiffel Tower for that matter, or the Golden Gate Bridge? Of those who have, what is the difference between being there and looking at a picture of there? A lot, you answer? If architecture in the age of mechanical reproduction can reduce all the tool (mental and physical) of creating a building to an after image removed from scale, tactile reality, weather, auditory surround, what more could you ask for in this exhibit, where you are not only surrounded by a new space, but countless images to consider and possibly take home?

Nouvel's shop will be a surprise for anyone expecting an exhibition, as it was for Storefront. The set up calls for reappraisals of earlier expectations. Re-configuring a situation via the insertion of an event into a given set of conditions, a tactic pioneered by the Dadaists' walks and the Situationists' dérive and manifestations, actively shapes passage and experience rather than conforming to a pre-selected series of options. Surrounded by endless choices—what color t-shirt, what brand of glass cleaner or what to watch on television, we are the legitimate heirs to the detached consumer-observers described by Baudelaire's flaneur who strolled among the crowds as a spectator, or Walter Benjamin's observations of the arcade wanderers.

This evolution to a passive consumer citizenry began at the end of the 19th century, as industrial advances generated demographic shifts that in turn filled urban centers to capacity. Meanwhile, diversions from the everyday rose in scale and popularity among those who occupied the crowded metropolis. The theatrical techniques and overwrought histrionics of these displays produced phantasmagoria as all-consuming that they created alternative realities. From department stores to exposition halls, all types of forums took

of us will have with his architecture. Like the transitional cinematic moment between one image and the next, Nouvel's re-arrangement of expectations, either material or conceptual invites anticipation. The rounded mass of his CLM/B800 office building follows a sequence of similarly formed existing barges moored along the Seine River, subverting the expected permanence of a headquarters address into a suggested site in motion. Paris' 16th-19th century urbanism lines the river up to the Institute of the Arab World. This building, which echoes the contours of the river banks directs the eye and the mind to the contemporaneity of the nearby university buildings and other late 20th century developments. In the instance of the Architecture Shop, a "storefront" becomes what it announces itself to be in and amongst its surroundings. Or does it?

These spaces define themselves out of surrounding demographic, historic and human factors specific to the site and use, and thus are contextualized in a way that is more than a vague integration of objects into the landscape. At the same time, their combination of explicit specificity with material effects and intellectual suggestion demands reaction.

Individual reactions are necessary both emotionally and politically to free ourselves from passivity. As the consumer has but pre-selected choices, in an election or at the grocery store, selecting one of the options is hardly a choice at all. But to examine the nature of the decision behind a choice is an altogether active prospect. The connection to sensory effects have been both described by philosophers and affected by convincing media and technological incursions into sensory realms. Aesthetic perception, a pre-intellectual neurological order, is subject to continual shocks in absorbing the plethora of available stimuli in order to make an informed decision. Walk down any city street, turn on any television and you will be confronted by a bombardment of matter to pass through and dissect. Jean Nouvel's projects offer us these challenges while we are surrounded by them.

Of course, we can not make decisions all the time. The apolitical, unemotional response to the demands of constant evaluation would be to accept everything at face value in order to avoid fatigue. As with the effects of any excessive behavior, aesthetic perception running on overload leads to an altered state. To combat the onset of this condition, the production of

their lead from theater's convincing displays of overwhelming appearances and physical stimulation to generate an artificial but convincing appearance of reality.

The widespread production of these effects has turned the city itself into a theater, with architecture but one of the elements that fill the sets of personal experience as we pass through them. This brings us back to the cinematic conditions described earlier. The illusions in this case, and the images that comprise it, are created not only by individual scenarios, but by the entire surrounding environment.

In response to this passivity induced by standing back and looking, the Situationists in the 1960's developed a theory of "psycho-geography" which sought to build new links with our surroundings through carving up maps and introducing other inversions of the norm. The ensuing disorientation offered an opportunity to re-invigorate contact with the environment and breed new desires.

The disorientation between new ways of approaching old attitudes, or the interface between the theoretics of the unexpected and the real world characterizes the content of Nouvel's work. Placing a greater emphasis on producing site specific effects to re-imagine thought and perception rather than merely building consistent arrangements of geographic tropes, Nouvel's work mediates between each site's contemporary circumstance and historical roots. Just as the material associations of Nouvel's glass transparencies protrude, combine and recede from sensory perception, so do the meanings of his projects.

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## LECTURE

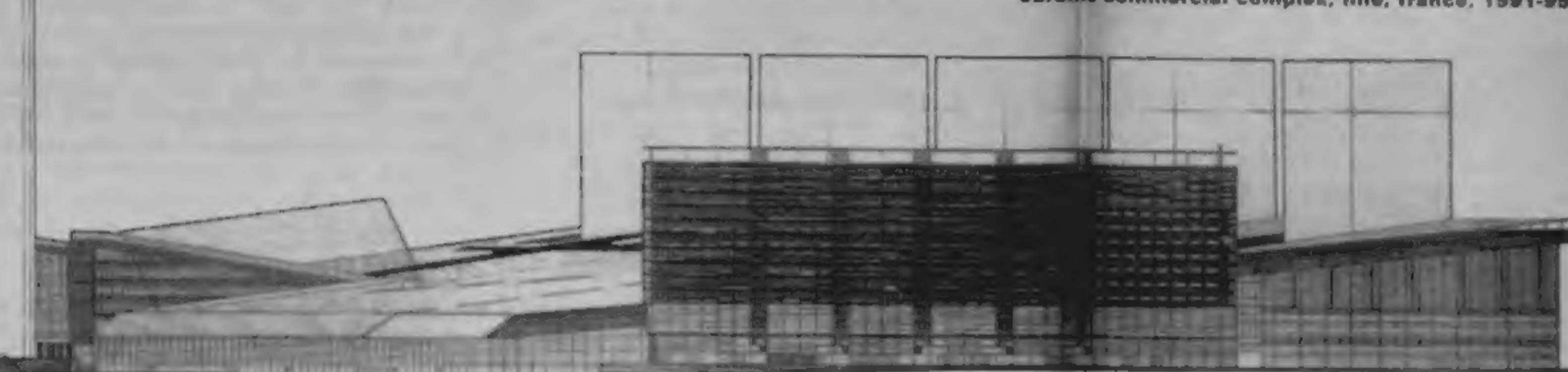
### Jean Nouvel's Recent Works

Wednesday, December 13, 6:30 pm  
Wood Auditorium  
Avray Hall  
The Graduate School of Architecture, Planning,  
and Preservation  
Columbia University

courtyard, institute of the arab world, paris, 1981-87



galeries commerciales complexe, lille, france, 1991-95



nemusa experimental school social housing, nimes, france, 1985-87



Many Corsicans at the conference had difficulty seeing the full potential of access to a wide range of information responsive to the users instantaneous electronic feedback by the users. Having previously regarded the Internet as a specialized device applicable only to large scale commercial activities, such as banking or travel businesses.

There was an obvious appeal in the prospects of instantaneous information easily reached from remote locations common to Corsica. At the same time, there is a hurdle to overcome to accept something from abroad that is seen with suspicion, as an intrusion that poses a divide to the social cohesion of a small island nation. Richard Lowenberg stressed the democratic and open, if not chaotic, dimension of Internet use available to any social strata and for any possible activity, from up to date weather forecasts to love connections, from children's play to scholarly research. It is in fact this gigantic hyper-encyclopedic multiverse of instantaneous contact that signifies new ways of dealing with reality and information. Undeniably, the locales that encourage Internet access, through low cost usage and open access, have a revolution in store.

Besides the rhetoric of wonderfulness in the form of technological blessings, there are many new concerns that will emerge as divisive issues: between the computer literate and the not, the internet junkies and the luddites, the monopolies afforded to appropriate entire segments of information for profit, job displacement and unemployment, or, most drastically, the end of work as we know it. The real potential

of Internet access ushers in a new territorializing mechanism, capable of evaluating work and productivity, as well as forming the basis of total control, connecting all accessible (democratic ?), information that can create marketing profiles to further classify and stratify society into coded segments of wealth, needs and desires.

ECO-TEC '95, a Forum of two cities, Bastia and Ajaccio was coordinated by Jean Pierre Vernet. The Forums have been graciously financed by the Corsican Chambers of Commerce. StoreFront's participation was in large part funded by the generosity of the National Endowment for the Arts International Program.

Amerigo Marras November, 1995

**BOOK OPENING**  
**The New American Ghetto**  
Camilo Jose Vergara

December 14, 6:30-8:30 PM  
StoreFront for Art and Architecture

Urban ghettos, as intrinsic to the identity of the United States as New England villages, national parks, and leafy suburbs, nevertheless remain unique in their social and physical isolation from the nation's mainstream. Semi-ruined, discarded, and dangerous, ghettos are rarely visited by outsiders.

The New American Ghetto provides an exploration, over nearly two decades, of ghettos in New York, Newark, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, and smaller cities. Vergara chronicles, through photographs and text, the profound transformations experienced by these places since the riots of the 1960s. He provides direct observations of urban landscapes and interiors, from residential areas and institutions to vacant lots and abandoned factories. He makes successive photographs of the same places, tracking change over time—changes that have made the conditions of today's ghettos profoundly different from those of an earlier era.

Vergara's interviews with residents and historical research contribute to his unique view of the nature and meaning of the American inner city. Titled "A photographic forecast of the demise of urban America," The New American Ghetto brings to light a world of forgotten ruin and struggling reconstruction alive in urban America today.

Rutgers University Press  
250 pp. 10" x 11" 100 color and 300 b & w illus.  
HARD COVER, \$49.95. 0-8135-2209-9

